East Market Street Pedestrian Scale Overlay Plan, Design Guidelines & Overlay Zone Development Regulations

Submitted jointly by the City of Greensboro and the East Market Street Development Corporation

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April 2, 2002

GREENSBORO ®

EAST MARKET STREET DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

East Market Street Pedestrian Scale Overlay Plan

1. Introduction

East Market Street is part of the major east-west thoroughfare that runs the breadth of the city. For much of Greensboro's history, East Market Street was the center of the African American business district in the city as well as the heart of the African American community. In the 1950's the area around the corridor was in severe physical decline. To remedy the physical conditions, this area became Greensboro's and North Carolina's first urban renewal area. Although the blighted buildings were removed and new public improvements installed, the area never regained the vitality and the position as an economic center it had once been.

In 1998, the City of Greensboro adopted the *East Market Street Corridor Development Plan,* after an intensive public planning process that lasted over 3 years. The vision statement for the plan expresses the overall goal for the improvement to this corridor.

> *The East Market Street Corridor shall be a vibrant community that is attractive, pedestrian friendly, and safe for the residents and businesses. Emphasis shall be attracting new businesses; making a commitment to minority opportunities and helping existing businesses thrive while maintaining the area's unique role as a cultural center for the entire community.*

There are several initiatives underway directed towards achieving this vision. One recommendation of the East Market Street Corridor Development Plan, and of a market analysis subsequently completed for the corridor was to revise the development regulations to encourage new development that is attractive and more pedestrian oriented. The pedestrian scale overlay zone for East Market Street and this corridor plan are intended to compliment the other efforts in the corridor including the new streetscape and traffic management improvements, site and façade loan program, and business & development recruitment efforts by the East Market Street Development Corporation.

2. Scope and Limitations of this Report

The City of Greensboro and the East Market Street Development Corporation (EMSDC) have identified a section of the East Market Street Corridor as a potential Pedestrian Scale Overlay District. These regulations are appropriate methods to encourage the type of development that will meet the objectives of the *East Market Street Corridor Development Plan* and over time re-establish the corridor as the vibrant, healthy center it once was.

3. Defining the Corridor

The *East Market Street Corridor Development Plan* addresses an area from Church Street on the west to English Street on the east. This plan is intended for a portion of that area from the railroad overpass on the west to the US 29 interchange on the east. This section is approximately 1 mile in length.

4. Planning Issues

Land Use The predominant land use in the corridor is institutional. North Carolina A&T State University buildings dominate the north side of East Market Street between Dudley and Booker Streets. There are several large churches throughout the corridor. Other institutional uses include, the Hayes Taylor YMCA and some non-profit organizations.

Scattered throughout the corridor are small office buildings, funeral homes and clusters of retail primarily at the US 29 interchange area and between Laurel Street and Benbow Road. Other uses include a renovated apartment structure at Benbow Road and the US Postal Service Office building and trucking operation at East Market and Bennett Streets.

The most significant investment and new land use in the corridor is the redevelopment of the former Cumberland Shopping Center site at Murrow Blvd, East Market Street and E. Friendly Avenue. Construction will soon be complete on the new Dudley-Lee Center which is a 30,000 sq ft office / retail complex.

Development Constraints

Acquisition of right-of-way for the widened East Market Street roadway aggravated the conditions, which inhibit development on many of the parcels sandwiched between the railroad tracks and the Street. These shallow parcels may have been made more difficult to develop by the establishment of parking standards for new development that are aimed at auto-oriented uses and users.

Site Development (setbacks, lighting, signage) Most of the structures built along the corridor were constructed in the 1960's and 70's and they reflect the automobile and thoroughfare-oriented development standards that were predominant at the time. Buildings are set back very far from the street. Many have large parking lots that front on East Market Street with the buildings set furthest away from the street. Most structures are only one or two stories high. There is no predominate style of signage and site lighting is inconsistent. Very few parcels share access, parking, landscaping or other amenities.

Pedestrian Access There is currently a great deal of pedestrian use in the corridor by the students and the residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. However they report how difficult it is to walk to destinations in the corridor, how unsafe they feel and how they have to cross through parking lots to access businesses. There are public sidewalks along East Market Street but there is very little inter connectedness between buildings and parcels.

An additional consideration is the posted speed limit on East Market Street and the actual speed automobile traffic travels the corridor. Although the posted speed is 35 miles per hour, the Greensboro Police Department repots that the average speed of traffic along the corridor at times is 10 to 15 miles per hour higher. It is in part due to the excess capacity of the street. It is hoped the forthcoming streetscape project will address this issue with traffic management improvements. However, this will issue will be continually monitored to determine if further reductions in the speed limit are warranted.

Landscaping Most parcels were developed before the current landscaping standards were adopted. As a result, landscaping throughout the corridor is inconsistent ranging from grassed front yards to the elaborate landscaping in front of NC A&T.

Railroad Access A development constraint is the location of the Norfolk & Southern rail road track on the southern border of the corridor. There is an issue of noise but also an issue of safety. Landscaping is encouraged in the development guidelines along the railroad right of way. Property owners will also be encouraged to consider fencing in addition to the landscaping for safety concerns.

5. Development Guidelines

The following development guidelines are meant to complement the overlay development requirements and work with EMSDC's Site and Façade Loan Program, meeting
the following objectives:

Objectives include:

- ❑ A more intimate image for the corridor (traditionally perceived by a pedestrian as less intimidating and more inviting), which brings buildings closer to the sidewalk.
- ❑ Interconnection between sites, suggesting/encouraging multi-purpose visits to the corridor, which builds on the proximity of retail grouping; and, which reduces road to site and auto to pedestrian traffic conflicts.
- ❑ Site improvements which enhance the character of the retail environment; especially those that soften the nature of automobile parking lots, and those that make the site pedestrian safe and friendly through lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, and building orientation
- ❑ Building and design which enhances the continuity of the corridor, and which enhance the opportunity to market the corridor as a place.

Article 6. Pedestrian Corridor Design Guidelines. The following guidelines should be used to guide site planning, building design and orientation toward the goal of corridor compatibility:

Section6 .01 Details, fenestrations, context sensitivity

- **(a)** Blank, undifferentiated exterior walls are unattractive and should not be visible from the street.
- **(b)** Building exteriors facing the street right-of-way should be designed so as to present more than 50% of first floor wall area as glazed display or window.
- **(c)** Where buildings within the block face between two intersecting streets establish a consistent or regular pattern of windows, floor height, or other building details, new buildings should remain consistent with these regular patterns.
- **(d)** All rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from view from adjacent properties and adjacent rights-of-way by use of parapet walls or screens designed to be compatible with building architecture.

Section6 .02 Building siting and orientation

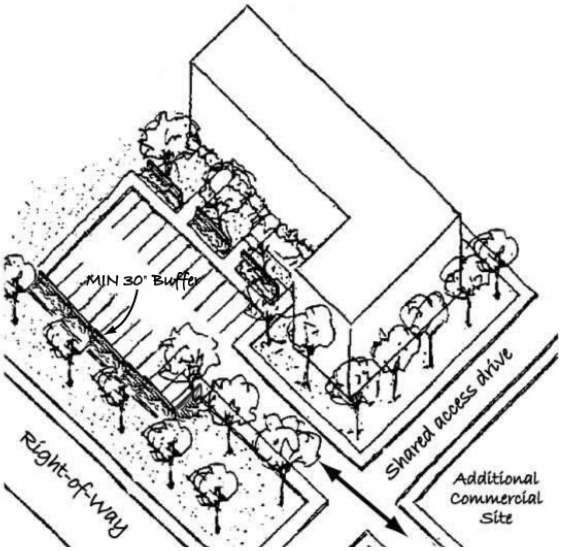
- **(a)** Location of entries
  - (i) Buildings, and their principal entry points, should be oriented to, and visible from the street front property line.
  - (ii) Wherever possible, buildings, and their principal entry points, should be sited in proximity to the sidewalk, forming a common building "wall," except for areas contiguous with the structures used for outdoor dining or courtyards.

Section6 .03 Parking Lot Landscaping/Lighting

Blank, undifferentiated walls like these should not be visible from the street.

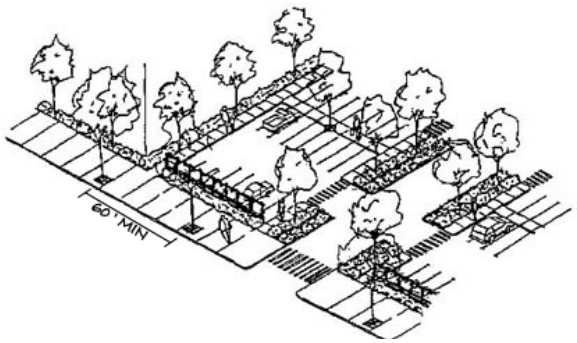
Example depicting first floor storefronts with 50% of the first floor wall area as a glazed display or window.

A consistent pattern of windows, floor heights, and building details should be maintained with new construction.



Entry points should be visible from the right-of-way.

(a) Where parking lots providing for 5 or more parking spaces are in view of the public right-of-way, there should be installed within a ten-foot wide street yard between the parking area and the street, a minimum of three (3), 1 3/4 inch caliper canopy trees and one (1), 1 3/4 inch caliper under-story tree per 100 linear feet of frontage. The substitution of one under-story tree for each required shade tree that would conflict with overhead utilities will be permitted within street yards.



Parking lots within view of the public right-of-way must be adequately screened. Wherever feasible, connections should be provided between adjacent parking lots.

(b) Where parking is placed between the building and the right-of-way, view of the parking from the street should be buffered to a height of 30 inches, except where vehicular sight lines may be impaired. Buffering should consist of one or a combination of the following:

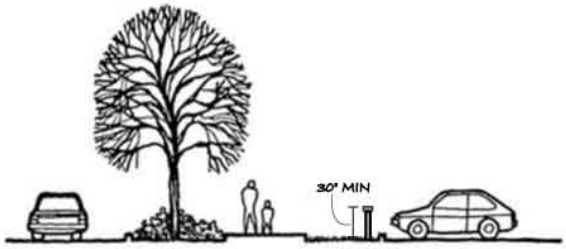
(i) Masonry walls compatible with proposed building design, and landscaped as a foundation wall.

(ii) Screening fence of wood or approved material at least 75% opaque. Chain link fencing with wood slats is prohibited.

Under-story and evergreen trees, shrubs (installed at a rate of one per each three feet of buffer length), and groundcovers. At a minimum, 30% of a planted buffer should be evergreen.

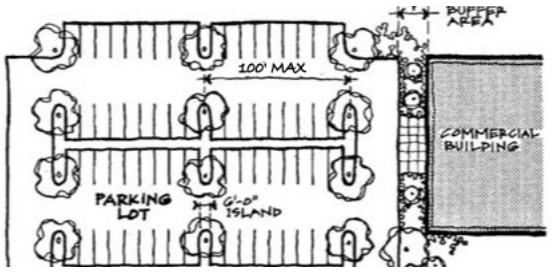
(iii) Any earthen berm between the right-of-way and the building should not exceed a height of 3 feet or a slope of 3:1 (Vertical : Horizontal).

In order to screen parking lots from the right-of-way, a combination of landscaping, berms, fencing, or walls should be used.



When utilized for screening parking lots, masonry walls must be compatible with the proposed building design, and should stand at a minimum height of 30 inches.

(c) To break up large expanses of parking and provide a minimum 5% landscape area, landscape islands should be required such that no parking space may be greater than 50 linear feet away from a landscape island containing a canopy tree. Landscape islands must be a minimum of seven (7) feet wide from



To minimize large expanses of parking, landscaped islands should be used. No parking space should be greater than 50 linear feet from a landscaped island.

back-of-curb to back-of-curb and a minimum of 200 square feet in area.

(d) Parking areas should be illuminated during hours of operation of the use so that the minimum illumination measured at any point on the parking surface is no less than 0.5 footcandles; and so as to provide a maximum average illumination not to exceed 2.0 footcandles (measured at the ground surface); and so as <u>not</u> to allow adjacent property to be illuminated by more than .5 footcandles measured at the common property line.

Section6 .04 <u>Site Access</u>,

(a) Driveways across from median openings should be consolidated wherever feasible to coordinate access at the median opening.

(b) Driveways should be designed with adequate on-site storage for entering and exiting vehicles to reduce unsafe conflicts with through traffic or on-site traffic and to avoid congestion at the entrance.

Section 6.0 5

<u>Improvements/Landscaping/Lighting</u>

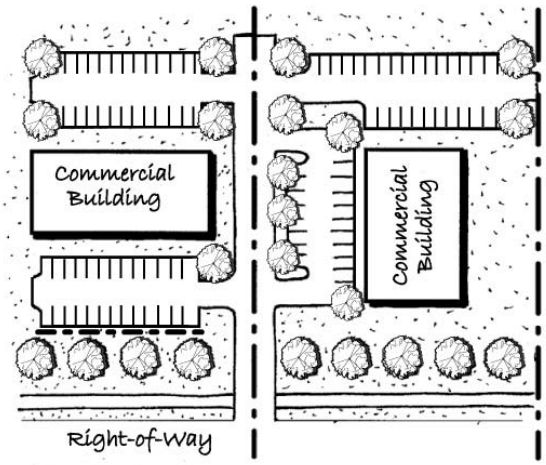
(a) All utilities serving the site should be buried underground.

(b) A minimum 15% of the gross site area should be landscaped open space or healthy existing vegetation.

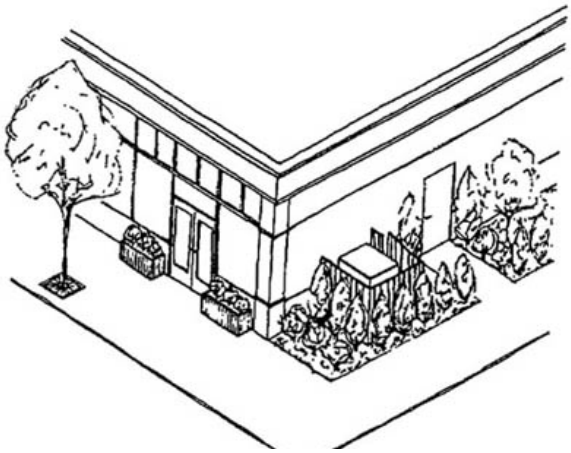
(c) All areas intended for pedestrian use should be well lighted by lighting fixtures that focus on lighting walkways and sitting areas.(See lighting section)

(d) Pedestrian paths or sidewalks should be clearly distinguished from vehicular paths by landscaping, paving materials, or architectural elements.

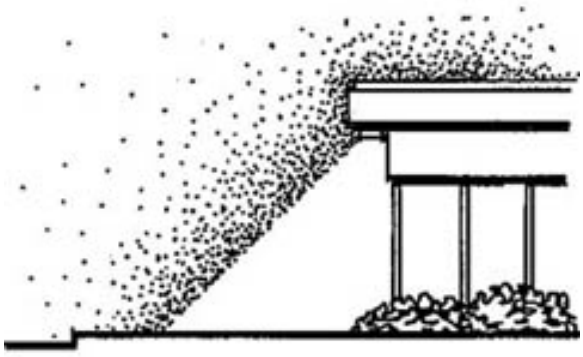
(e) All pedestrian paths should be handicap accessible, using ramps and curb cuts conforming to state and federal standards.



Parking areas should be screened , and where appropriate, access provided between adjoining uses.



A minimum of 15% of the gross site area should be landscaped. Such landscaping should be integrated with the architecture and design of the structure, screening ground level utilities.



Building lighting should focus on lighting walkways and sitting areas.

(f) Maintenance of on site improvements is required for all developments.

(g) Prior to development, measures should be taken to protect all natural elements from damage due to construction activities.

(h) The area necessary for safe and efficient construction activities should be clearly identified on the site plan and staked on site.

(i) Trees to be preserved should be identified and protected as required by the tree preservation ordinance.

(ii) All sensitive areas including: wetlands, slopes, and vegetation, outside the construction zone should be protected with fencing or other barrier devices.

(i) Landscaping Between Buildings.

(i) There should be sufficient quantities of canopy, under-story and evergreen trees, shrubs and ground covers to adequately screen unattractive views at the side and rear of adjacent buildings.

(ii) There should be a minimum quantity of one (1) canopy tree for every 500 square feet of open space between and at the rear of buildings.

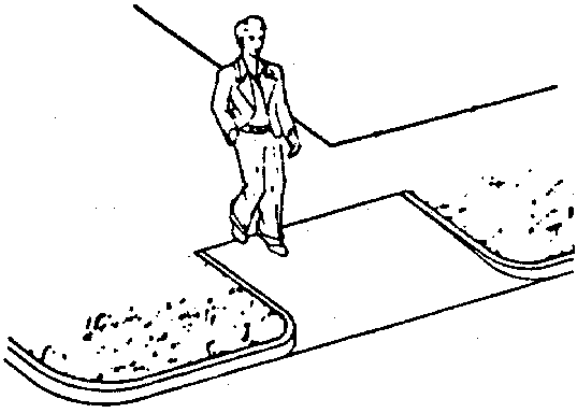
(j) Foundation Planting

(i) At minimum a 4 foot wide landscape area should be provided adjacent to all building walls (excluding driveways, entrance areas, covered walkways, service and delivery areas).

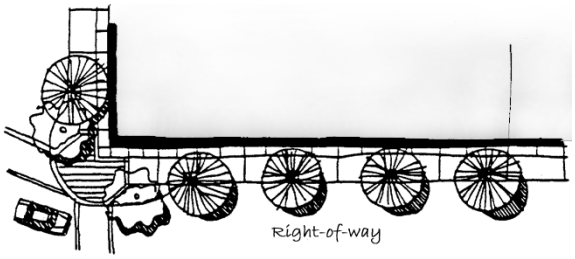
(ii) This landscape area should be planted with a balance of under-story and evergreen trees, shrubs and ground covers.

(iii) These plantings should emphasize softening of large expanses of building walls length and height, accent building entrances and architectural features and screen mechanical equipment adjacent to buildings.

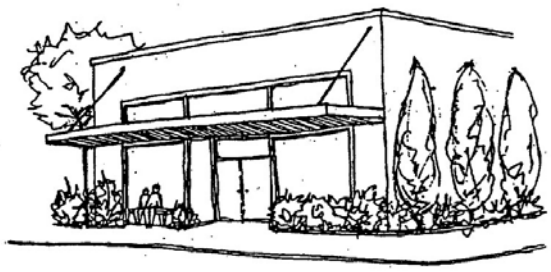
(k) Intersection Visibility



All pedestrian paths should be handicap accessible, providing curb cuts that conform to ADA requirements.



Landscaping and paving materials should be used to distinguish pedestrian paths and sidewalks from vehicular

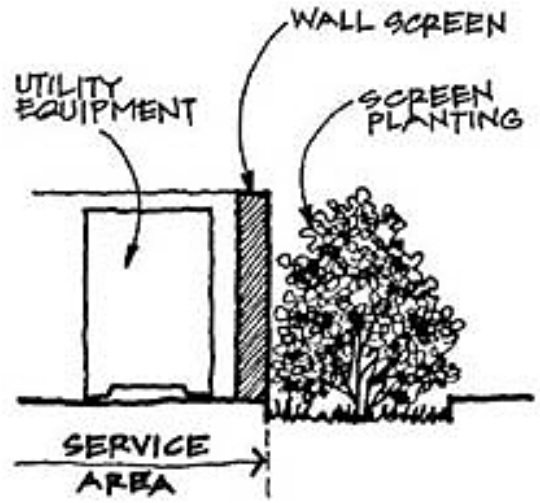


Plantings should be provided adjacent to all buildings and should be used to soften large expanses of building walls, accenting entrances and architectural features

(i) Landscaping must be designed and installed to minimize potential obstruction of critical sight lines.

(ii) Landscape planting should be designed so as to avoid obstruction of a motorist's vision at the intersections of outlet access drives and ring roads, access roads or municipal streets.

(iii) Unobstructed visibility between 2 and 6 feet above the height of the paved surface of the access road must be maintained at all intersections and vehicular access points.



Landscaping or a wall screen should be used to screen mechanical equipment from adjacent to buildings.

Section6 .05 Site Safety

(a) Site lighting

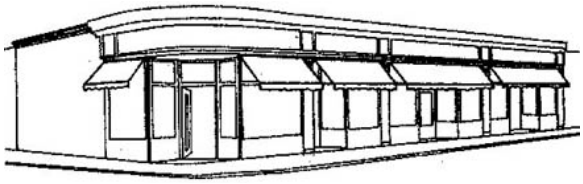
(i) Each site must be illuminated during operating hours of the use so that site users may move in all public areas of the site without walking through areas where illumination is less than 0.5 foot candles as measured at the ground surface.

(ii) Entries to the building, both principal and secondary, should be illuminated at all times so that not less than 0.5 foot candles of illumination may be measured at the ground surface within 5 feet of the entry. Luminaires within fixtures used to illuminate entries should not be directly visible from off the site.

(b) Observability

(i) A portion of the walls adjacent to parking areas and walkways should be glazed so as to allow for observation of all parking areas and walkways from inside the building.

(ii) Site landscaping and building features should not be installed or maintained in a way which allow a person to hide from observation by pedestrians on the site.



A portion of walls adjacent to parking areas and walkways should be glazed.

(c) Railroad side safety

(i) The design of parking areas, walkways, and buildings must prevent areas along the Norfolk - Southern

Railroad right-of-way from being used to loiter or dwell without observation.

Section6 .06 Bicycle and Pedestrian Interconnections

(a) Opportunities for bicycle/pedestrian mobility should be enhanced through site design strategies and bicycle/pedestrian access ways that seek to shorten walking distances and increase accessibility between uses.

(b) Pedestrian circulation should be provided between abutting commercial properties through the use of walkways and similar pedestrian-oriented facilities

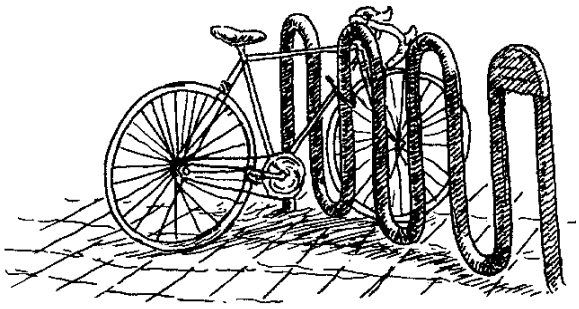
Section6 .07 Handicapped accessibility

(a) An accessible route to the principal entry to the building within the boundary of a site should be provided to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

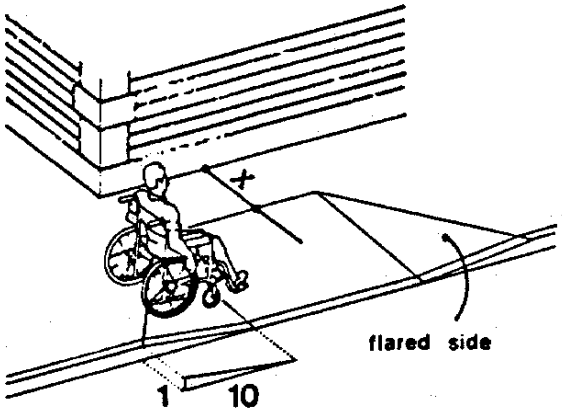
(b) Bike access and parking accommodations

(i) Vehicular parking lots should include bicycle parking areas and facilities to reduce the need for vehicular access.

(c) For each 10 vehicular parking spaces, one space in a bike rack should be provided.



Increased accessibility for bicycle mobility can be enhanced through site designs that incorporate bicycle racks.



Sidewalks and pedestrian paths along rights-pf-way and parking lots should incorporate design features compliant with ADA standards to accommodate individuals with disabilities.